



NEWS RELEASE

VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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BARLEY AND COTTON ACREAGE UP; PEANUTS, WHEAT, SOYBEANS, CORN AND TOBACCO ACREAGE DOWN

Virginia's soybean producers intend to plant 530,000 acres this year, according to the results of a survey conducted March 1 by the Virginia Agricultural Statistics Service. This amounts to a 2 percent decrease from the 2004 crop year. Corn producers intend to decrease acreage in 2005 to 470,000, this is a 6 percent decrease from last year's planted acres.

Cotton producers intend to plant 85,000 acres, which is 3,000 acres above last year. Acreage intended for peanuts is expected to decrease by 8,000 acres to 25,000. Hay acreage intentions remains the same at 1,290,000 acres.

Barley acreage seeded last fall for all uses was 60,000 acres, up 5,000 acres from last year. Winter wheat producers have decreased their acreage this year to 200,000 acres. This is 5 percent below last year's planted acres. Oat acres seeded and to be seeded for the 2005 crop year are expected to total 15,000 acres.

Tobacco acreage intentions devoted to flue, burley and dark fired will be down in 2005. Producers expect to harvest 14,000 flue-cured tobacco acres, a 39 percent decrease from 2004. Fire-cured tobacco producers intend to harvest 450 acres, 270 acres below last year. Burley producers intend to harvest 4,500 acres this year which is 1,500 acres below the 2004 estimate.

Planting of major row crops is just beginning or in the planning stages, therefore producers could change their plans as the planting season progresses.

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**Corn Planted Acreage Up 1 Percent from 2004 Soybean Acreage Down 2
Percent All Wheat Acreage Down 2 Percent All Cotton Acreage Up 1 Percent**

U.S. corn planted area for all purposes is estimated at 81.4 million acres, up 1 percent from 2004 and 4 percent above 2003. If realized, this would be largest corn acreage since 1985. Expected acreage is up from last year throughout much of the Corn Belt and southern Great Plains. However, growers in most States in the Delta, Southeast, and northern Great Plains intend to decrease their corn acreage as producers are switching to other more profitable crops due to low corn prices and high fuel and fertilizer costs.

Soybean producers in the U.S. intend to plant 73.9 million acres in 2005, down 2 percent from last year's record high acreage. Of the 31 soybean producing States, growers in 16 States intend to plant fewer acres this year, while producers in 11 States intend to plant more acres than in 2004. The largest acreage declines are in the Dakotas, where low soybean prices have some farmers shifting to other crops. Large declines in soybean acreage are also expected in the Delta and Southeast States.

All U.S. **wheat** planted area is expected to total 58.6 million acres in 2005, down 2 percent from 2004. If realized, this would be the lowest planted acreage since 1972. Winter wheat planted area for the 2005 crop is 41.6 million acres, down 4 percent from 2004. Of the total, about 30.5 million acres are Hard Red Winter, 6.6 million acres are Soft Red Winter, and 4.5 million acres are White Winter. The 2005 other spring wheat planted acreage is estimated at 14.4 million, up 4 percent from last year. Of the total, about 13.7 million acres are Hard Red Spring wheat. Area planted to Durum wheat is intended to total 2.61 million acres, up 2 percent from the previous year.

All U.S. **cotton** plantings for 2005 are expected to total 13.8 million acres, 1 percent above last year. Upland acreage is expected to total 13.5 million acres, also up 1 percent. Producers in Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, and Texas intend to decrease acreage from last year. Growers in all other cotton producing States intend to increase planted acreage. American-Pima cotton growers intend to increase their plantings 10 percent from 2004, to 275,000 acres. The increase is primarily in California, where producers are intending to plant 25,000 more Pima acres than last year.

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